

from his mock cash delivery to a bank that a bright-eyed old man accosted him and walked along with him.

"Messenger service, eh, Mr. Alling?" he questioned.

"Yes," assented Gerald.

"Thought that loss of theirs would stir up the bank," observed his companion. "Say, I guess I shall never be able to thank you enough for that situation you found for me."

"Oh, I was glad to be of service to you," declared Gerald heartily. "Dropped your inventions, have you?"

"Until I get a little capital ahead, yes. Look here, drop in and see me at my room some time soon," suggested the inventor with a studious glance at the satchel Gerald was carrying. "I'd like to show you a new wrinkle I've devised to make the bank messenger absolutely immune from loss."

"Why, you interest me," declared Gerald. "I will surely avail myself of your invitation."

He had been going pretty regularly to see Lucy Ward, but her father had circumscribed these calls to once a week now.

"It is nonsense to think of marrying," he declared sharply, "or even an engagement until your salary is materially increased and you have enough to start housekeeping in some substantial way."

"It's a long prospect ahead, then," mourned Gerald, but Lucy loved him; he knew that, and both exerted the virtue of patience.

Nothing of a sensational character had happened along of his carrying the empty money satchel. One day, however, the bank detective came to him.

"You needn't know it except to keep a firm grip on your nerve, Alling," he said, "but you are being followed."

"Is that so?" inquired our young hero.

"I feel sure of it. I have noticed

two suspicious-looking characters apparently on your trail for three consecutive mornings now."

That evening Gerald went to visit his friend, the inventor, for lack of a better place to go to. The man was a genius and grateful to the young bank man for past favors done.

That night he showed his gratitude to Gerald by proving that he had done some thinking in his behalf.

When Gerald left the inventor's room he carried a fair-sized package, which he took down to the bank with him.

When he got ready to start on his decoy route next morning he went to a secluded corner of the bank and placed the package in question carefully inside of the satchel.

A wire from it he ran through the canvas so that its loop just clasped one of his fingers.

Every morning after that for more than a week Gerald repeated this operation and one eventful day there were results.

A jam of vehicles near a crowded court, a jostling mob around him, two men got close up to him. One quickly caught his arm. The other gave him a push down the court away from the street. Gerald Alling smiled despite his peril.

"Give up that satchel!" ordered one of the men.

"Take it!" retorted Gerald accommodatingly, and he left the loop slide from his finger.

Bang—bang!

Ding—ding—ding—ding—ding—

A frightful alarm of sound echoed from inside the satchel—two revolver shots, the sharp, rasping clanging of half a dozen bells.

The dismayed and discomfited looters stared marvelingly at satchel and messenger. Before they could turn and run the bank detective was at their side.

Gerald saw them led to a patrol wagon, went on his way and after banking hours was called into the private office of the president of the